

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Elaine C. Duke  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Acting Secretary Duke and Secretary Tillerson:

We write you today in support of extending the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for the estimated 195,000 El Salvadoran immigrants that was first granted to them in 2001 after a series of earthquakes caused devastating landslides across El Salvador. More than 30,000 of these TPS holders live in Maryland, and have become a part of our communities – raising their families here, starting small businesses, and adding to the vibrant culture of America and our state.



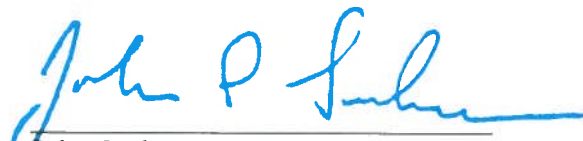
Beyond the earthquakes, from which El Salvador has yet to recover, the nation is currently roiled by extreme street violence brought on by two gangs, MS-13 and Barrio 18, which have been classified as terrorist organizations by the Supreme Court of El Salvador. The violence has resulted in one of the highest murder rates in the world, at 81 per 100,000 persons in 2016. Nearly a quarter of the population was the victim of a crime in 2015. This bloodshed has significantly affected El Salvador's economy as well, as job opportunities shrink and 35% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Already destabilized by natural disasters and violence, the return of nearly 200,000 individuals that El Salvador is not prepared to accept would only throw the country into further chaos. Ending TPS for El Salvadoran individuals here would further diminish stability in the region, and cause more people to flee violence in an effort to return to the United States.

Moreover, returning these people to El Salvador would upend the communities, families, and livelihoods that they have established over the past sixteen years in addition to harming the U.S. economy to which these 200,000 people have been contributing. It would also undermine U.S. efforts to advance economic development and security in Central America. As your predecessor, Sec. John Kelly stated at the Conference for Prosperity and Security in Central America, the "U.S. Homeland Security mission is affected directly by what goes on in Central America."

We therefore strongly urge you to reauthorize Temporary Protected Status for El Salvador on behalf of the 35,000 El Salvadorans who call Maryland their home, and the 195,000 individuals who have been living and thriving in the U.S. these past sixteen years. While El Salvador continues its efforts to stabilize a terribly shaky situation, it is incumbent upon the U.S. to not inject further turbulence and stress in the region.

Very truly yours,

  
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress  
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Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress  
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John K. Delaney  
Members of Congress  
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John Sarbanes  
Members of Congress